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REED HAS MADE QUITE A COMEBACK IN WRESTLING

By Dave Guffey
UM Sports Information Director

MISSOULA--

Wrestling was one of the most important things in Randy Reed's life, until his senior year at Billings West High School.

That year he saw all of his 10 years of wrestling experience fall by the wayside. He suffered a stroke in the AA wrestling tournament, which was ironically held at Billings West that year. His picture was on the front page of the tournament program. However, he was worried more about regaining his health than wrestling.

After winning his preliminary bout (9-0) in the state tourney, Reed said his whole body tightened up after the match. The eventual result was a paralysis of the right side of his body.

"I remember just laying in the locker room, scared to death," the University of Montana junior said. "The doctor told me there was no way I could go on and wrestle, and that I probably couldn't wrestle again."

"I think the hardest thing to do was to tell my coach (Francis Rose) it (the season) was over for me," he recalled. "I remember watching the state finals, and I kept saying to myself that I should be out there."

Reed, who is originally from Williston, North Dakota, before moving to Billings, still had wrestling in his blood, though.

(over)

"REED" -- add one

"I was going to Montana State, and walked by the wrestling room one afternoon," he said. "I told the coach I wanted to go out. He said OK, but check with the doctor. The 'doc' said OK, just take your time."

"Well, I wrestled a couple of matches late in the year, but really didn't like the program that much," he said. "I was going to go back to North Dakota, but then coach (Jerry) Hicks got the job here. I redshirted (sat out) a season."

The 20-year-old Business Management major said to be back into wrestling was kind of a dream come true." He added that Hicks, "really knows his wrestling, and how to communicate with the team."

Now, just a few years later, Reed has overcome the potassium deficiency that caused him physical problems, and has compiled an 11-2-1 record at 118 pounds thus far this season for the Grizzlies. He is undefeated in Big Sky Conference action with a 3-0 record.

Reed said he vividly remembers his first match after the injury. It was two seasons ago against Doug Forrest, now a Grizzly teammate.

"I remember that match quite well," he said. "Part of me said take it easy, and part of me wanted to wrestle as hard as I could. After I wrestled a couple of minutes I told myself that I had overcome it (the injury). Now I feel like I'm almost 100 percent. I do take a lot of vitamins, and am working on my strength."

Reed wasn't sure about his future in wrestling, either was Hicks, who had been his coach for a season at Billings West.

"I saw him his senior year, and he weighed 89 pounds," recalled Hicks. "He didn't look like he'd ever wrestle for anyone. I guess I kind of gave up on him."

(more)

"REED" -- add two

"Randy grew up with wrestling," Hicks said. "When I got the job here (two seasons ago), I got permission from his athletic director to talk to him. He had gained some weight back, and was getting stronger. When he came here he redshirted a year, and that really helped him."

Hicks said Reed had a fine future, "but he needs to gain more strength. He'll have a super future if he gets stronger. He definitely has the moves to be an outstanding wrestler."

Now wrestling is once again an important part of Randy Reed's life.

"It means a lot to me to continue wrestling," he said. "I guess I don't take as much for granted anymore."

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